

Sing with Me

*Waldorf Curriculum
Preschool Newsletter*

March 01, 2006

ACTIVITIES

As you well know, spending time with children is always rewarding. It can help you to see the world around you in a whole new way and to value things that you may take for granted or consider perfectly ordinary. On the other hand, when you are entirely responsible for their care, even small children can be intimidating. Just what do you do with them all day? This newsletter is here to help – whether you're a parent, grandparent, babysitter, caregiver, neighbor, or anyone acting as a substitute teacher and spending the day with a preschool-aged child.

The following sections will give some suggested activities for this week's theme as well as methodology and ideas for preparation.

"Sing with Me"

Parents know that singing with their children is important. Of course, when you feel like you *can't* sing, or you don't have a musical instrument, or you can't read music, it's easy to come up with excuses. But the fact is that it's better for your child to hear you sing off-key than to not hear you sing at all. Singing in a high soft voice is a wonderful way for children, especially infants, to learn the sounds of our language and to make a connection with their caregivers. And singing encourages movement in children and allows them to be expressive. Best of all, singing is lighthearted, spontaneous, fun. It's a way of sharing the joy of life. Sing simple tunes which are easy for your child to follow. You may discover that you know more songs than you thought! And making up your own words or tunes is fine too.

This newsletter focuses on picture books which you can find at the library that include printed music and lyrics. (Now you have no excuse not to sing!) Iza Trapani, in particular, has made a career out of taking traditional nursery rhymes and children's songs, adding in new lyrics to extend the story, and illustrating and producing them as picture books. Only one of her books is included here but be sure to look for others if you enjoy her style.

The Spiritual Syllabus early childhood series, written by Susan Whitehead, consists of four tiny volumes, one for each season of the year. Each book contains a story and music to accompany it. These books are part of the Waldorf Curriculum community library and we are happy to lend them out. The Gateways kindergarten series published by Wynstones Press is also full of songs and printed music. This series is very highly recommended!

Have we forgotten a favorite of yours? Please share your suggestions with the Group: waldorfcurriculum@yahoogroups.com.

Daily Schedule

7 am wake up, morning verse, get dressed, breakfast

8 am School

- ❖ opening verse 8 am
- ❖ daily activity 8:05 am

Monday	watercolor painting, dance
Tuesday	visit farmer's market, make vegetable soup
Wednesday	visit library
Thursday	bake bread, churn butter
Friday	handwork project (beeswax modeling, coloring, seasonal crafts)
Saturday	field trip (visit nature center, art gallery, museum, concert, dance)
Sunday	housekeeping (waxing, washing, polishing, mending)

- ❖ independent play (outside) 8:50 am
- ❖ circle time 9:30 am
- ❖ independent play (inside) 9:45 am
- ❖ clean up 10:25 am
- ❖ story, puppetry, drama 10:40 am
- ❖ closing verse 10:55 am

11 am lunch

11:30 am nap

2:30 pm snack

3 pm independent play

4:30 pm nature walk

5 pm prepare dinner, set table

5:30 pm dinner

6 pm bedtime routines

7 pm bedtime

For more details on this schedule, please visit our website at www.waldorfcriculum.com and click on the article "How to Homeschool."

Index Cards

When you follow this simple schedule, the only things you'll really need to plan in advance are

1. the daily activity,
2. circle time,
3. storytelling, and
4. dinner.

Your entire planning can easily fit on a 3x5 index card. Make up a card for the day with notes on what you plan to do and simply carry it with you. Or, if you will have the child on a regular basis, sew a small pocket to keep the card in and hang it on the wall. The child will love to run to the pocket and take out each day's card to see what you'll be doing together. Make note of what resources you need to complete the activities, such as story books, cookbooks, a book of rhymes and fingerplays, craft books, etc.

The Waldorf Way

Some things about the Waldorf way of spending time with preschool children may be new to you. Here are some general notes; feel free to visit our website at www.waldorfcriculum.com for more information and resource links for Waldorf education.

Verses provide rhythm, security, and a transition between one activity to another. They are an important way for your child to take the time to stop, rest, and center himself before beginning the next activity, and they also provide a moment of quiet thankfulness and gratitude for each part of the day.

Helping around the home is an essential part of any Waldorf curriculum. It is not necessary to put a child in front of the television while you do the dishes or sort the laundry into lights and darks; let the child help you. Even if you have an automatic dishwasher, a child can help by rinsing the dishes before they are loaded. Children love to do work that they know is truly helpful and all young children thrive in situations where they are allowed to imitate an adult. Washing the dog, washing the car, sweeping or dusting, repotting houseplants, feeding the cats, setting and clearing the table... all of these are wonderful activities to do with a preschool-aged child.

Cooking is always a wonderful activity for a child to participate in. Bearing in mind any dietary restrictions (such as vegan or vegetarian, gluten-free, kosher, etc.), food allergies, and common-sense kitchen safety, consider preparing a simple recipe with the child. Children love to wash vegetables, measure and mix ingredients, and set the table for a meal. Preparing and eating a snack is always popular!

Don't forget the many benefits of unguided imaginative *Play*. You need to stay nearby for safety's sake, if the child is in an unfamiliar environment or you aren't certain what should or should not be childproofed. All children need daily time to play. In the preschool years, play is the WORK of the young child. Prepare an appropriate play space and then stay out of it as much as you can; give the child the simplest and highest quality toys you can find such as large pieces of cloth, blocks, dolls, and materials from nature (such as pinecones, feathers, or shells). Avoid plastic toys. Consider a basin of water and some measuring cups or add some dish detergent and give the child a whisk. The more open-ended a material, the more of the child will be brought forth in playing with it. The more structured a material, the less will be required of the child – and the less he will grow and develop when playing with it. As a simple test, try playing with the toys yourself. If you find you tire of a thing quickly, so will a child!

The Waldorf view of *Handwork* is different from the usual craft projects done with young children. Handwork must have an authentic context – it must be truly useful and must be completed slowly, deliberately, and with pride. As children grow, they benefit from the lessons learned in doing handwork – that taking your time, following all the steps, and doing your best work will result in a product of which you can be proud.

Process – not product – is the emphasis of *Art* time. Be sure that your child understands that art activities are for learning, for exploration, and not to be afraid to have fun! Even many adults in our society are afraid to experiment with art materials because “it won't look right”; nip this attitude in the bud!

Storytelling is an important part of the Waldorf method. A wonderful resource we recommend is [Storytelling with Children](#) by Nancy Mellon. If at all possible try to learn more about storytelling and puppetry. If you just don't feel comfortable telling stories orally, we provide suggestions for picture books you can read which go along with each topic. It will actually be more damaging for your child to experience an insincere story where the adult feels false and uncomfortable. Also, remember that storytime or puppet shows at your local library can be a part of your plans for the day but DO NOT take place of reading one-on-one with the child. This personal connection and quiet nurturing time is a very different experience than the social one of experiencing a story in a group.

What follows are my notes for lesson planning this week. We encourage you to share your own ideas; simply email the Group at waldorfcriculum@yahoogroups.com.

Wednesday – March 1

Visit Library: storytime @ 10:30 am
Topic: "Pond Life"

Circle Time:
"A Change in the Year" from Treasury of Children's Poetry page 219
add the Spring-Fairy to the Nature Table The Nature Corner page 25

Storytelling:
read & sing Snow Drop and Ulba Bulba
add snow drop flower child to the Nature table The Nature Corner page 30

Dinner:
Celery and Apple Salad with Pecans Everyday Food page 66

Thursday – March 2

Bake Bread, Churn Butter:
Rose Room Rolls Kindergarten Snack Book page 16

Circle Time:
drive to the new house, plant grain seeds (dragonsclaw millet) in garden
sing Earth, Sun, Wind and Rain A Child's Seasonal Treasury page 92

Storytelling:
read & sing Song of the Swallows

Dinner:
Baked Sweet Potatoes with Brown Sugar Everyday Food page 19

Friday – March 3

Handwork:
finish Uncle Jay's gifts
(Marbelized Pencil Set from N, cat toys stuffed with catnip and wool from L)
Natalie wrap the presents, make matching marbelized gift tags

Circle Time:
make felt mouse to accompany "Tailor" song
<http://gfwsheep.com/felting/felt.html>

Storytelling:
read & sing Tinker Tailor: Folk Song Tales

Dinner:
Garlicky Pork Ribs with Greens Everyday Food page 102

Saturday – March 4

Family Event:
Uncle Jay's birthday party

Circle Time:
learn new hand-washing verse "Shimmering Sea"
A Child's Seasonal Treasury page 9

Storytelling (bedtime):
read & sing Swim the Silver Sea, Joshie Otter

Dinner:
Parmesan-Crusted Chicken Everyday Food page 23

Sunday – March 5

Housekeeping:
sweep floors, dust
laundry

Circle Time
learn new verse "Cleaning Up" A Child's Seasonal Treasury page 9

Storytelling:
read & sing Mary Had a Little Lamb

Dinner:
Grilled Cheese Sandwich Everyday Food page 32
Classic Tomato Soup Everyday Food page 38

Monday – March 6

Watercolor Painting, Dance Class: dance class @ SCC 10 am

Circle Time:
act out each verse of Over in the Meadow:
dig, swim, sing, dive, buzz, caw, chirp, bask, croak, and shine

Storytelling:
read & sing Over in the Meadow

Dinner:
Red Snapper with Tomato-Olive Compote
and Rice Everyday Food page 84

VERSES

Opening Verse

The Waldorf method places a strong emphasis on establishing rhythms throughout the day which give a comfortable sense of order and security to a child's life. One of these is to start your day (or your time together) with a short meditation called an opening verse. Choose a place which is clean and orderly; children are deeply sensitive to their environments and are unable to feel calm in the midst of chaos. Lighting a candle while you say the verse is customary, as this helps to establish a reflective atmosphere. Even if you choose not to do light a candle, the opening verse will be a transition for the child into your care. After you declare yourselves to be "ready now for work and learning", you can blow out the candle and begin your day!

Opening Verse:
In the morning at the sunrise
When the light of day doth break,
Children's souls, by angels guided,
Sleep from rested body shake,
Ready now for work and learning,
Happy, steady, and awake.

Closing Verse

Use this verse to end your time together on a high note, striving to go forth and made the rest of the day a good one. Like the opening verse, lighting a candle is customary and provides a sense of closure. When the candle is blown out, you will go forward feeling positive about the next thing to come your way.

The golden sun so great and bright
Warms the world with all its might.
It makes the dark earth green and fair,
Attends each thing with ceaseless care.
It shines on blossom, stone, and tree,
On bird and beast, on you and me.
So may each deed throughout the day,
May everything we do and say
Be bright and strong and true,
Oh, golden sun, like you!

GROCERY LIST

Produce:

lb celery
apple
4 medium sweet potatoes
2 oranges
peeled garlic cloves
2 lb collard greens
fresh herbs: parsley, thyme
lemon
2 medium yellow onions

Pantry:

tomato paste
chicken broth
two 28 oz cans whole peeled tomatoes in juice, with basil
14.5 oz can diced tomatoes in juice
capers

Meat:

3 lb country-style pork ribs
4 red snapper fillets, 6 to 8 oz each

Dairy:

sour cream
heavy whipping cream
unsalted butter
grated cheddar cheese

Deli:

grated Parmesan cheese

Bakery:

firm white sandwich bread

MATERIALS LIST

The Spring-Fairy:

from The Nature Corner, pages 25-27

fleece wool

a piece of thin knitted cotton 6 inches square

a piece of skin colored thicker knitted cotton 3 ¼ x 6 inches

two pieces of silk for the gown

 lighter color (top piece) 15 inches square

 darker color (bottom piece) 18 inches square

embroidery thread and a fine needle suitable for working with silk

a marble

light yellow mohair wool or magic wool

a piece of cardboard 4 ¼ inches wide

a card 6 ¼ inches square

a piece of silk for the hat 7 x 8 ½ inches

bits of tissue paper in spring colors

Flower-Children:

"A Flower-Child with a flower in her hand"

from The Nature Corner, pages 30-31

we are making the snowdrop flower-child, pictured on the front cover and page 24

fleece wool

a piece of soft thin knitted cotton 4 inches square

a piece of pink thicker knitted cotton 4 ¾ inches x 2 ¼ inches,

 and a scrap piece for the hands

a pipe cleaner

two pieces of felt in the colors of the flower:

 4 ¾ x 2 1/8 inches for the skirt piece

 2 x 3 ½ inches for the top piece

wool for the hair

tracing paper and a pencil for the pattern

basic sewing supplies

MATERIALS LIST

Grains for Home Growers:

grains for home growers:

<http://www.vidaverde.co.uk/grains.html>

finger millet:

http://www.farmradio.org/english/radio-scripts/58-7script_en.asp

Knitted Cat Toys:

catnip mouse pattern: <http://wendyknits.net/knit/mousepat.htm>

worsted weight wool yarn in mousy colors and corresponding size needles

cable holder

tapestry needle

unspun wool fleece and dried catnip for stuffing

Marbelized Pencil Set:

from Martha Stewart Living magazine, February 2005

<http://www.marthastewart.com/page.jhtml?type=content&id=channel193647&contentGroup=MSL&site=living>

set of plain wood pencils

¼ lb alum

uncoated (non-glossy) medium weight paper

clothesline and clothespins

iron

liquid acrylic paints (look for paints marked "AP" for non-toxic)

½ lb methyl cellulose

whisk

two shallow 14 x 16 inch baking pans

knitting needle or bamboo skewer (for Swirl pattern)

two pieces corrugated cardboard, toothpicks (for Rake pattern)

Alum and Methyl Cellulose are both available in the starter Marbling kit from Jacquard – available at Dharma Trading Co: <http://www.dharmatrading.com/marbling/>

RESOURCE GUIDE

Waldorf Verses for Circle Time and Play

<http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/VERSES.htm>

Activities

- Treasury of Children's Poetry ed. by Alison Sage
- The Nature Corner by M v Leeuwen & J Moeskops
- A Child's Seasonal Treasury by Betty Jones
- Martha Stewart Living magazine February 2005

Stories

- Storytelling with Children by Nancy Mellon
- Snow Drop and Ulba Bulba by Susan Whitehead
- Song of the Swallows by Leo Politi
- Tinker Tailor: folk song tales by Charles Keeping
- Swim the Silver Seas, Joshie Otter by Nancy White Carlstrom
- Mary Had a Little Lamb by Iza Trapani
- Over in the Meadow by John Langstaff

Recipes

- The Waldorf Kindergarten Snack Book ed. by Lisa Hildreth
- Everyday Food magazine March 2006

Make a donation to Waldorf Curriculum when you buy any of these books – and it won't cost you a thing! Simply visit www.waldorfcurriculum.com and initiate your order through our Amazon Affiliates link. Your support makes a difference. *Thank you.*